at present?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SALMAN KHURSHEED): (a) No, Sir. Government of India have made no such moves vis-a-vis China or any other Asian country. Nor has China or any other Asian nation done so with us. As the Hon'ble Member is aware, India does not believe in joining military alliances or pacts.

(b) Does not arise.

Arrangements for Haj Pilgrims

6623. SHRI N. GIRI PRASAD: SHRI SATYA PRAKASH MALAVIYA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a large number of Huj Pilgrims go by air and by ship from India every year;

(b) if so, the arrangements made along with the number and the fares charged during the last three years;

(c) the precise arrangements for Haj Pilgrims made this year and the progress so far, alongwith the fares charged and the facilities offered; and

(d) the summary of the complaints/ suggestions received from individuals/ assiciations in this regad and the action taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R.L. BHATIA): (a) Yes. Sir. Approximately 25,000 pilgrims proceed for Haj under the arrangements made by the Central Haj Committee and around 15,000 pilgrims go additionally on their own.

(c) and (d) Arrangements made for Haj pilgrims going under Central Haj Committee arrangements include hiring of accommodation on their behalf in Makkah and Madinah, chartering aircraft/ship for carriage of pilgrims. despatch of Medical Team together with medicines and medical supplies for the benefit of pilgrims, additional Administrative staff for the assistance of Haj Pilgrims, despatch of Khuddam-ul-Hujjaj (Haj volunteers) from various States, special arrangements for pre-departure Health/Immigration formalities, exemption from Airport Tax and release of Foreign Exchange.

Number of pilgrims having performed the Haj during the last 3 years as well as this year is given in table below together with the fare charged to the pilgrims:

year	Pilgrims by sea	Pilgrims by Air	Total No. of Pilgrims
1991	4508	18790	23298
1992	4723	19486	24209
1993	4562	20630	25192
1994	4700	20300	25000 (Expected)

FARE CHARGED (In Rupees)

Year	By Air	By Sea			
		Bunk Class Cat. H.	1st Class Cat. I	Cat. HI	
1991	10000	3000	8750	8500	8250
1992	10500	3750	8750	8500	8250
1993	11000	3750	8750	8500	8250
1994	12000	3750	8750	8500	8250

(d) There have been complaints about the quality of on board services and inadequate baggage capacity on Haj flights, inadequate number of doctors/ paramedics in the Haj Medical Mission and pilgrims' accommodation arranged at distant places.

An exercise is conducted after Haj every year to review the arrangements/ facilities in consultation with representatives of Central and State Haj Committees with a view to drawing lessons for the future.

Suggestions made by these representatives and others have been taken care of by emphasising on the need to charter by Air India aearoplanes with services of acceptable international standars, hiring accommodation at more

convenient locations and augmenting the medical/administrative team.

Interview given by the Cabinet Secretary to Saudi Paper

6624. SHRI VERENDRA KATARIA: SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to an interview of the Cabinet Secretary Shri Zafar Saifullah, to a Saudi Paper last month which was published on okaz in Riyadh, a week before Pakistan tabled its resolution on Kashmir;

(b) if so. what are the details of the replies given to the press by Shri Saifullah;

(c) whether it is also a fact that Shri Saifullah is reported to have spoken of the Government's failure to protect the Babri Masjid from Hindu onslaught and also dissatisfaction with the representation of minorities in Government jobs; and

(d) if so. what is the reaction of Government of India in regard thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R.L. BHATIA): (a) Yes, Sir. The Saudi paper, OKAZ, carried on 18.2.94 an interview, the account of which was found by the paper itself to have been grossly distorted, and in consequence of which it published the correct version as per its records is not only the OKAZ newspaper on 8.4.94 but also in its English daily, the Arab News, on 9.4.94 with a condensed version appearing also in another newspaper, the Riyadh Daily, on 4.4.94.

(b) The questions posed at the interview of the Cabinet secretary focussed on the Cabinet Secretary's functions, the conditions of muslims in lndia, constrains faced by Muslims in India, the future of the muslim minority, the demolition of Babri Masjid vis-a-vis Hindu extremism positions of importance held by Muslims, and Indo-Saudi relations. The Cabinet Secretary, while characterizing the demolition of the structure as an act of barbarism, had stressed that the Government of India had taken swift corrective action in the wake of the incident. He had also mentioned that a number of persons have been indicted because of their connivance with, this act and also that the Government of India stands committed to the construction of the mosque, as stated by the Prime Minister on a number of occasions. Regarding the representation of minorities in Government jobs, do Cabinet Secretary had mentioned, inter alia, that India is truly secular society in which religious minorities are not discriminated against and also that the Government of India has been making assiduous efforts to rectify the situation (with regard to jobs in Government services and in the public sector) and to create an environment in which people of all communities are given fair and adequate opportunity to get employment in the Government and public sector.

(c) No. Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Pak Attempts to Fund Subversives Through Nepal Bank

6625. DR. SANJAY SINH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government attention has been drawn to the news item appearing in the Economics Times, New Delhi of 4th March, 1994 under the heading Pak attempt to fund subversives through Nepal Bank;

(b) if so, whether Govemment have ascertained the terms and conditions of joint agreement between Habib Bank of Pakistan and Himalayan Bank of Kathmandu and if so, the details thereof;